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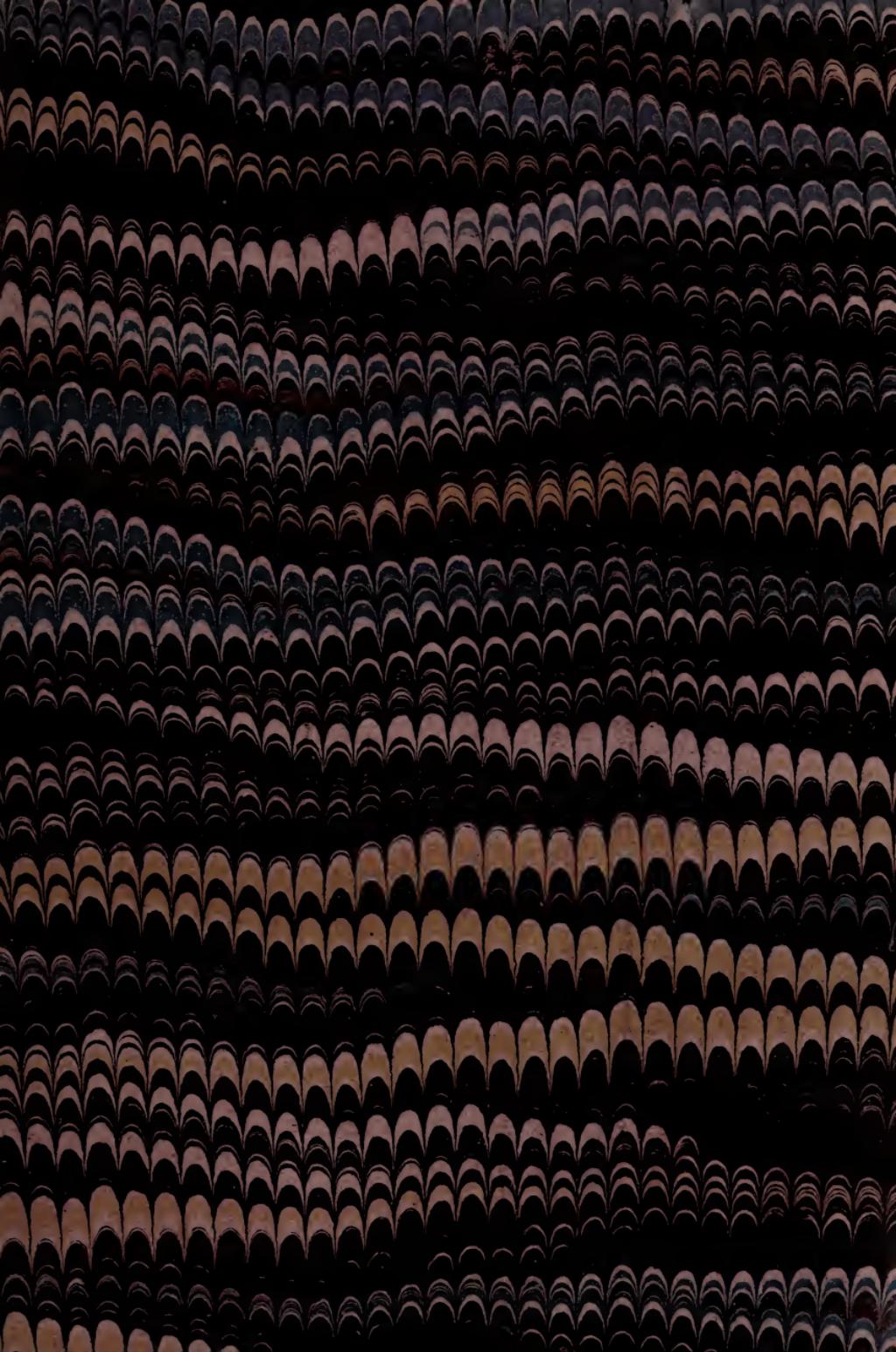


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[Thomson, George William]

VERSES FROM JAPAN.



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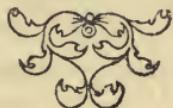


NOTE.

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*G. W. T.*

*London, 1st January, 1878.*







## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
 MMÉ and Genjiro, a Leap Year	
Legend of Japan . . . . .	7
Lament of the Princess of Mikawa	
on the Death of her Husband . . . . .	16
Lament of the Prince of Chofshiu on the Death	
of his Wife . . . . .	20
Fumifera Japonica . . . . .	23
The Lady and the Flower . . . . .	26
The Wife's Appeal . . . . .	29
The Wife's Triumph . . . . .	32
The Fading Flower . . . . .	35
The Swan . . . . .	38
The Rose and the Rain . . . . .	40
The Butterfly . . . . .	42

	PAGE
A Fan Song . . . . .	44
Song: My Love is like a Rock . . . . .	45
Song: The Woods are Green in Summer Time	47
A Thought for a Famous Friend . . . . .	49
The Best Physician . . . . .	51
Song: When Fast I Flew to My Sweet Love .	53
The Dream . . . . .	54
The Last Words of Misawa Menjiro . . . .	57
The Morning Moon . . . . .	58





## OMMÉ AND GENJIRO,

A LEAP YEAR LEGEND OF JAPAN.

**I**N the land of Yamashiro,  
    In the sweet and sunny  
        south,  
Singers love this touching story,  
    Passing it from mouth to mouth.

Youths and maidens lean to listen,  
    Passion's fiery thrill they know,  
And in aged breasts it wakens  
    Tender thoughts of long ago.

Once upon a time a noble,  
Travelling from the city's din  
With a crowd of careleſs servants,  
Rested at a village inn.

Sojourn'd there a wicked warrior,  
Whose fierce face with hot blood shone :  
Strange, each bore the name far famous,  
Oba Gendazaemon.

In the morning, when the sunrise  
Bathed in light the land and sea,  
Rose the noble from his pillow—  
Rode unarm'd across the lea.

And behind him his retainers  
Many a costly burden bore,  
When upon them surged that other,  
Like a wild wave on the shore.

Filch'd had they his choicest armour ;  
Surely simplest child might con :  
On the box-plate blazed in splendour,  
"Oba Gendazaemon."

Not one moment would he listen ;  
Shook his frame with pent-up ire :  
"Such mistakes," he screamed in fury,  
"I remit with sword and fire."

Fierce and fast like Noto's tempests  
Burst his blows upon the train ;  
Turn'd the noble at the clamour,  
First he fell among the slain.

Dire as earthquake came the tidings  
To his waiting wife and son :  
Dead ! with Hope's gay buds still breaking,  
Dead ! with half his triumphs won.

Day and night on fleetest coursers,  
Like the winds that hilltops blow,  
Through the stream, and o'er the mountain,  
Swiftly rode young Genjiro,  
Till he came to where his father  
Lay in hovel dark and dead ;  
Nerveless lay the limbs of iron,  
Dreamless lay the kingly head.

Stung with fury vow'd the stripling  
O'er the land from south to north,  
He would track the base assassin  
And his dastard soul drive forth.

And, that he might wander freely,  
Donn'd the boy a beggar's dress ;  
But its coarseness could not fully  
His surpassing comeliness.

Tall he was, and straight as arrow,  
Fair his cheek, and forehead high ;  
Kiffo's eagles could not equal  
The proud glance that fill'd his eye.

From the first faint streaks of dawning  
Scann'd he close the gaudy throng  
That to Kanongsama's temple  
Swept in crowds the whole day long.

Here the merchant sleek and smiling,  
There the noble proud and grave,  
Here a group of laughing ladies,  
Like a foam-topp'd, sunlit wave.

But the dark-brow'd, red-cheek'd visage,  
With its black eye flashing fire,  
Never down the temple's alley  
Came to vengeance deep and dire.

One chill morn a maiden wealthy,  
Breathing prayer the temple sought;  
From her *kango*'s dainty cushions  
Peep'd her sweet face full of thought.

Clad in rags the fair boy beggar  
Braved the weather wild and wet;  
Silver cast the kindly maiden,  
And their eyes one moment met.

Rude disguise could never cover  
That lithe frame and beauteous face,  
That brave eye and thoughtful forehead,  
That unconscious, conquering grace.

Daily to the idol's temple  
Passes Yamashiro's Pearl,  
And her parents fondly fancy  
Ommé grows a pious girl.

But when clouds of cherry blossom  
Snow'd the stony path to prayer,  
Glanced she at the well-known corner;  
Ah ! her darling was not there.

Never more to see the glory  
Of his beauty, near or far ;  
She was like a skiff on ocean,  
Searching for lost guiding star.

Sad she grew, the warm glow faded  
From her rosy, rounded cheek ;  
Head on hand she lay and languish'd,  
Like a lily, white and weak.

Leaden-hearted lived her parents,  
While they watch'd her pale and pine :  
Deep the heart of love-sick maiden,  
Deep as Sado's golden mine.

But one evening, when Death's shadows  
Seem'd the summer fields to fold,  
To her mother faintly faltering  
She her long-kept secret told.

Through her tears and smiles she whis-  
per'd  
She could bear no other fate  
Than to wed her heaven-sent idol,  
That bright beggar at the gate.

O'er the land they sought and found him :  
He had closed his cruel quest,  
For his fiery foe had fallen  
In the dark lands of the west.

He had loved the winsome maiden  
From that first sweet smiling start :  
Linger'd in his ear her accents,  
And her image in his heart.

All the joys that life can lavish,  
When the soul is fresh and fair,  
Through their softly-gliding summers  
Shed their sweetness on the pair.

Thus they tell the pleasant story,  
As the seasons come and go,  
Of the love of gentle Ommé  
And the high-soul'd Genjiro.

From the cottage to the palace,  
From the cradle to the pall,  
In all ages, in all countries,  
Love is ever lord of all.





## LAMENT OF THE PRINCESS OF MIKAWA

ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND.

**W**ANES the white moon, but not  
the bursting heart  
That brighter grows, and fuller  
of its woe.  
Time cannot lessen sorrow such as mine.  
The spring flowers blossom and the even-  
ing air  
Is warm and fragrant, while with honied  
throats  
The orioles, from a maze of cherry  
boughs,

Sing all the sweet love-secrets of their  
nests.

But oh! for autumn with her withering  
woods,

And skies that shed a thousand streaming  
tears!

The world's best jewel sank in death's  
dark stream,

And I, an empty bubble on the wave,  
Live in the sunshine, while its light is  
gone.

They laid his body in the gloomy grave:  
He went before me down the dreadful  
way

That all men travel, shuddering and alone.  
Soon I shall follow, for the days fly fast:  
Then, oh, my darling! through the mists  
of time

I see our souls together, soaring high,  
Like eagles breasting the blue waves of  
heaven,  
Rejoicing in the sunshine, far beyond  
The whirring arrows of the hunter Death,  
And all the many miseries of the world.

Now comes the quiet majesty of night,  
With sleep's fair frost to hush life's bab-  
bling streams.

Husbands and wives lie down in blissful  
rest :

Like golden lilies dreaming in the sun,  
Fond women slumber in the arms of  
those

Whose love lies round them, as the sap-  
phire sea

Circles the fragrance of an isle of flowers.  
Dust is your bed, beloved ; mine is pain :

White are these cheeks where once the  
roses blew,  
Cold is this breast that once was fill'd  
with fire,  
For, till death comes, my own sweet love  
is dead.





## LAMENT OF THE PRINCE OF CHOSHIU

ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

**W**AKING at midnight when the  
world is still,  
Alone I seem to drift upon a  
tide

Of dreary waters, while the dying moon  
Sinks slowly, gathering all her tender rays  
And leaving the dark-visaged night for-  
lorn.

Moans the wild wind : the air is fill'd  
with frost :  
My eyes are dull, but solitude and cold,

Like cruel-throated watch-dogs, scare  
away  
The timid traveller, Sleep.

I cannot rest :  
A dear face shines upon me like a star  
Through death and darkness. Poor, sweet,  
lonely love !  
Oh ! I would be the stone upon her grave,  
Or the least flower that blossoms on her  
dust,  
But for the blessed hope that I shall meet  
My darling somewhere in the silent land.  
The rock of death divides the rushing  
wave,  
But the twin streams shall surely meet  
again.

Through the dim world the village temple  
bell

22 *Lament of the Prince of Choshiu.*

Touches my ears, and every solemn sound  
Repeats her name whose pensive thoughts  
were prayer.

My arms are empty, but my heart is full,  
And shall be full of her for evermore.





## FUMIFERA JAPONICA.

**I**KI butterfly in sunbeam gay,  
Or precious gem of dazzling ray,  
Ohāna is the brightest fay—  
The sweetest flower in Yedo;  
Almost as fair she is as those,  
With eyes of blue and cheeks of rose,  
Who dance till happy daylight goes  
On daisied English meadow.

Her eyes—dark wells of passion deep  
Whene'er her soul is stirr'd—now sleep  
In sunshine, and her fancies leap  
Like wavelets soft and stilly;  
Her hair is bound with skill and grace;  
Upon her laughing lips a trace

Of saffron flower is seen : her face  
Is powder'd like the lily.

As many-colour'd is her dress  
As that entrancing loveliness  
Which spans the rain-swept sky to bless  
The earth—a gladsome duty ;  
With *samisen* upon her knees,  
And gaudy fan to coax the breeze,  
She sits beneath embowering trees—  
A little Eastern beauty.

But, smiling, from her sleeve she takes  
A tiny pipe, and gently breaks  
The *kokubu*'s beloved flakes,  
And lights a morsel gaily ;  
A whiff or two—the joy is done,  
But scarcely ere again begun.  
She smokes, I trow, if she smokes one,  
Of pipes a hundred daily.

Alas ! they cast a shade on this—  
The purest pearl of earthly bliss—  
The swift and sweet delicious kiss

Young lips soon learn the knack o':  
I would not wed an angel bright,  
With wings that fluttered soft and white,  
And eyes that swam in liquid light,  
If she could smoke tobacco.

Then puff away all undismay'd,—  
In curling clouds your graces fade ;  
No fervour shall your peace invade ;

O exquisite Ohana !  
But on my knees I'd pray and pine,  
In passion's agonies divine,  
If only, sweet, you would resign  
That vile Nicotiana.





## THE LADY AND THE FLOWER.

**T**HERE was a sweet flower, red  
and white,  
That fill'd the gazer with de-  
light.

Dropp'd in soft showers the summer rain;  
Joy bounded through each teeming vein.  
Shone the glad sun, and round it roll'd  
His quickening heat in waves of gold.  
A lady from her chamber came,  
And watch'd its bells in beauty flame.  
Each jewell'd branch she closely scann'd :  
Then, with the brightest in her hand,

Across the grass she gaily sped,  
And, smiling, to herself she said,  
"Of flowers that bloom, or birds that  
fly,  
Not one is half so bright as I."  
So, from the sun to grateful gloom,  
She pass'd into her fragrant room,  
Took down the mirror from its place,  
And gazed on her own lovely face.  
Close to her cheek then held the flower,  
Still sparkling with a silver shower,  
And softly murmur'd, "Eyes that shine  
"Like crystals—rosy lips are mine.  
"The foolish flower can never vie  
"With this fair face—so sweet and shy."  
Her husband view'd the pretty scene—  
The blossom in its robe of green—  
The smiling girl in silken dress  
Rejoicing in her loveliness,

And felt the thrill to monarchs known,  
The darling vision was his own.  
Hearing his merry laugh she turn'd,  
And ask'd with blush that brightly burn'd,  
“ Which is more beautiful ? ” a smile  
Rippling around her lips the while.  
A roguish light was in his eye,  
And jestingly he made reply,  
To draw into some sunny strife  
His dear, vain, jealous little wife.  
“ The flower a thousand times,” he cried,  
“ Ah, would that it could be my bride,  
“ Fair as an angel from above ;  
“ My soul is one wild sea of love ! ”  
An angry flush swept o'er her brow :  
“ What think you of your beauty now ? ”  
She said : then dropp'd the blossoms  
    sweet,  
And crush'd them with her dainty feet.



## THE WIFE'S APPEAL.

**S**INCE honest love lies dead  
    within your eyes,  
And pity speaks not in a single  
    tone,  
And no fond thought makes kind your  
    cruel touch,  
Take a sharp sword and slay me. I must  
    die.  
Ah ! once my heart was like the rounded  
    moon,  
Reflected in still waters ; now it breaks,  
Toss'd by the whirling eddies of despair.  
Sweet were the days of youth, and sweeter  
    yet

The golden summers when your love was  
strong,

Before Omatsu blossom'd into flower.

But when that brightness came, I saw  
your soul

Bend like a slender branch beneath the  
bird

That, flush'd with spring and weary of far  
flight,

Sinks, soft as snowflake, on the rosy  
world.

Dreams the fair dove among the quiet  
trees,

Or speeds in sunny splendour o'er the  
fields :

What life more free and full of pleasant  
things ?

I am a foolish bird whose mossy nest  
Is burn'd to ashes, and with wounded wing

I flit through flaming woods in pain and  
fear.

Is there a shelter in the withering world ?  
Where shall I go ? What friend can com-  
fort me ?

O husband, love or kill me where I lie.





## THE WIFE'S TRIUMPH.

(THE HUSBAND SPEAKS.)

**E**IERCER within my breast the  
battle grew:  
Now sweet Omatsu, gem of  
brightest ray,  
Would lead me captive with a winning  
word;  
Then your fond looks would fill my heart  
with pain,  
And your sad face brings sorrow to my  
dreams.  
But, as the moon's reflection on the  
sea

Still keeps its place though mounting  
billows roll,

Your steadfast purpose lasted through the  
storm,

And I am drawn again to purer ways.

Stands a proud rock above a patient  
stream

That wanders wimpling through pine-  
scented glades

From fairy fountain on the purple hills.

No arrow shot from strongest archer's bow  
Can pierce the cruel stone. With angry  
frown

He scorns the courting water of the  
stream,

And casts a careless glance upon her  
smiles.

But undismay'd the gentle current flows,  
Lifting her loving arms in close embrace,

And making summer sweeter with her  
song :

Till, inch by inch, the hard rock melts  
away ;

The glad stream rushes through his  
inmost heart,

And laughs and claps her tiny hands for  
joy.

Henceforward, Oh ! my darling ! there  
shall be

Unclouded skies and love that cannot  
change.





## THE FADING FLOWER.

**W**ANDER'D where the sweet-  
ness of summer made com-  
pleteneſſ,

And all the woods were blushing with  
the fiery glow of flowers,

When softest winds were blowing, and  
ſongful ſtreams were flowing,

And ſped, alas! too ſwiftly the honey-  
laden hours.

I found amid the ſplendour a little bud ſo  
tender,

I trembled with a thrill of joy I ne'er  
had known before ;  
Like one in a sad story who turns a page  
of glory,  
Or shipwreck'd sailor nearing a smooth  
palm-planted shore.

With pride beyond all telling I bore it to  
my dwelling,  
And placed it where it shone like star  
in night's engulfing gloom,  
And there through years of gladness, or  
weariness and sadness,  
It fill'd with Heaven's own lustre the  
lonely little room.

Now, though its leaves grow crisper and  
cruel voices whisper,  
The flower has lost its beauty and  
groweth dim and old,

To me it beams as brightly as if it  
quiver'd lightly  
In morning's dewy freshness, when  
distant hills are gold.





## THE SWAN.

**A**LL in a soft and silent dream  
A bright bird, on a dimpling  
stream,

Floated through sheen and shade :  
The blue wave from her snowy breast  
Fell swiftly, though, with wings at rest,  
She scarce an effort made.

To me she seem'd to glide along  
As easily as childhood's song  
When summer skies are fair;  
For who could see the busy feet  
That 'neath the flowing waters beat  
With endless toil and care?

Somehow I mused on lofty life  
That show'd no trace of storm or strife,  
    But swept serenely on,  
Harmonious as the laws that guide  
The throbbing star, the swelling tide,  
    While sunlight round it shone.

But none can tell the anxious thought  
By which *that* stately course was wrought  
    Between its banks of flowers ;  
The sleepless watch, the secret pain  
That almost left the spirit slain,  
    The weary working hours.





## THE ROSE AND THE RAIN.



ROSEBUD in a garden gay  
Hid all its sweetness from the  
day :

Its crimson leaves were folded fast,  
Though sunbeams softly o'er it cast  
Their golden glory, and the breeze  
Sang of a thousand sights that please.  
But rippling rain at length apart  
Drew the green vesture from its heart,  
And left it smiling in the sun,  
To life, and love, and beauty won.

Trembled the trees, the wind wax'd high,  
Swept a fierce storm across the sky,

The lightning like a sword-blade gleam'd,  
From the black clouds a torrent stream'd,  
And soon the radiant leaves empearl'd  
Were scatter'd o'er the weeping world.

True love is like a silver shower,  
That fills with light the summer hour ;  
But passion like a tempest sweeps  
All loveliness to darksome deeps.  
Bright heart of boyhood, ponder long  
The meaning of the simple song !





## THE BUTTERFLY.

**D**KNOW a fair lady whose face  
is a treasure  
That dazzles the eyes of all  
men with its ray,  
But dreaming of naught but the passing  
day's pleasure,  
She lives like a butterfly golden and  
gay.

In summer's full glory, when south winds  
are sighing,  
And earth's slowest pulses with sweet  
passion start,  
Amid the vast joy, in soft ecstasies dying,

It chooses a blossom and clings to its heart.

But when tempests gather and dim the blue morning,

And mist-cover'd mountains frown over the plain,

It leaves the poor plant its bright hues were adorning,

And speeds with swift wing from the wrath of the rain.

Ah ! light is the love that grows chill in dark weather ;

It sings in the sunshine, but pines in the shade ;

Unless we can wander with brave hearts together,

Go, find a new lover, my beautiful maid !



### A FAN SONG.

**L**ITTLE fan, does never anger  
Stir your heart when all things  
lie

Steep'd in deep delicious languor,  
'Neath the sunny summer sky?

Sleep the billows on the ocean ;  
O'er the fields no breezes stray :  
You alone with busy motion  
Toil through all the drowsy day.





## SONG.

**M**Y love is like a rock  
Where birds of white wing  
fly,  
Which billows overleap,  
And sun can never dry.

My fondest fancies spring  
Around him every hour,  
Bound breaking at his feet,  
And o'er his brightness tower.

The gazer on the land  
Looks long across the wave ;

He sees a ridge of snow  
Where waters roll and rave.

The rock—it lieth low  
Beneath the tumbling sea ;  
My darling's steadfast soul  
Is known to none but me.





## SONG.

**H**E woods are green in summer-time  
And bright with blossoms gay :  
The murmur of the happy leaves  
Sounds all the golden day.

But here a tree, by lightning struck,  
Is black, and bent, and bare.  
It lifts its arms like phantom fell,  
And dims the funny air.

A bird that built its dainty nest  
'Mong branches blossom'd o'er,

Still sings upon the wither'd bough  
As blithely as before.

O fond and faithful as the bird  
That haunts the leafless tree,  
Though darkest clouds of sorrow came,  
My sweet love stay'd with me !





## A THOUGHT FOR A FAMOUS FRIEND,

ABOUT TO TRAVEL NORTH IN WINTER.

 LOUDS in sorrow come together;

Wild and wet the winter weather;

Dark night shrouds the day with woe:

Cold and bleak the winds are blowing

Flocks of birds wing-weary going

South to where the sunbeams glow.

When the blinding snow falls thickly,

And your soul grows faint and sickly,

D

50 *A Thought for a Famous Friend.*

While your slow limbs ache and smart—  
Though the sport of chill December,  
Over all the land, remember,  
You lie warm in every heart.





## THE BEST PHYSICIAN.

**W**HEN I am sick,  
O send for him  
Who sooner cures  
Than doctors grim !

His presence bright,  
His laughing eye,  
Would make the god  
Of illness fly.

I hear his step ;  
He is so dear,

All pain forgot,  
My brain grows clear.

Glad thoughts spring up  
Too sweet to tell ;  
He takes my hand,  
And—I am well.





## SONG.

**W**HEN fast I flew to my sweet  
love,  
A thousand miles seem'd one,  
Though stormy skies made night above,  
Within me shone the sun.

What matter if the way were wild,  
And white the cold sea's crest,  
If I might reach, where summer smiled,  
The haven of her breast.

But now that far from her I go,  
Light of my lonely dreams ;  
Since every step is sad and slow,  
One mile a thousand seems !



## THE DREAM.

**D**WAITED for my darling all  
through the summer noon ;  
The crimson flame of sunset  
came, and then the silver moon ;  
And hearing not in silence deep a bird or  
blossom stir,  
I laid me down and slumber'd, that I might  
dream of her.

In sweet and simple beauty, with blush the  
breezes gave,  
As lithe as willow bending beside the  
wimpling wave,

She rises 'mid sleep's darkness, like star  
through mist that shines,  
Or fairy flower in branching bower among  
the forest pines.

The Spring is laughing from her lip, the  
Summer warms her breast,  
Upon her head the darkling skies of cloudy  
Autumn rest,  
While Winter takes her tiny hand and  
covers it with snow :  
Yet warm and soft its tender touch ! My  
happy pulses glow !

Alas ! the joy is fading, the lovely face  
grows dim,  
The vision bright, the rosy light, in min-  
gling shadows swim.

But o'er me bend delicious smiles, and  
eyes with love that beam :  
Her own bright self has broken her image  
in the dream !





## THE LAST WORDS OF MISAWA MENJIRO.

**B**E brave and faithful in your way:  
Whatever foolish men may say,  
Heaven sends to every earnest  
soul

A light to lead it to its goal.  
As beyond sight or scent of shore,  
Bewilder'd by the breakers hoar,  
The sailor never wants a guide  
Upon the ocean wild and wide ;  
By day the cranes in steady flight,  
By night the North star's lovely light.









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